

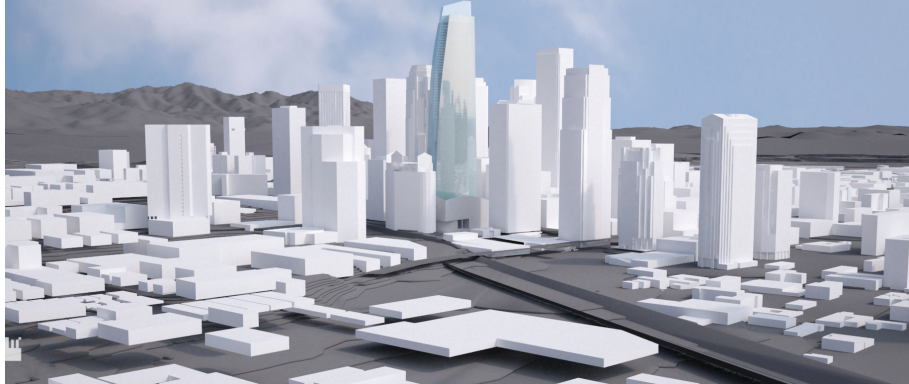
# THE WEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER 08\_09.26.2012

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## CHANGE ON THE HORIZON



For decades the Los Angeles skyline has been relegated to “also-ran” status compared to the iconic expanses of cities like New York and Chicago. One commonly cited contributor is a requirement in the city’s 1974 fire code that calls for rooftop helicopter landing space, keeping high-rise tops uniformly flat and stubby.

**Above: AC Martin imagined how its Wilshire Grand tower could look if the helipad rules were changed.**

Innovative skyscraper forms could be on the horizon, however, Los Angeles Fire Department working group can identify enough building safety **continued on page 9**



**An old warehouse will be transformed into a new center for LA's tech sector.**

TECH-INCUBATOR MOVES FORWARD, DESIGN UNVEILED

## GROWING THE FUTURE

A project that many feared might die when California abolished its community redevelopment agencies is moving ahead. The La Kretz Innovation campus, an incubator for clean-tech companies located in LA's Arts District, recently unveiled

ambitious plans designed by John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects.

The 65,000-square-foot adaptive reuse of a concrete reinforced-masonry warehouse on a 3.1-acre site near the corner of Fifth and Hewitt was once **continued on page 3**

Craig Dykers and Kjetil Thorsen



WARRIORS SELECT SNØHETTA TO DESIGN SAN FRANCISCO ARENA

## DOUBLE DUTY

The Golden State Warriors recently selected Snøhetta and AECOM to design a proposed arena on San Francisco's Piers 30–32. The choice of Oslo and New York-based Snøhetta, which is also designing the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's major expansion, was widely praised in the local design community. Management for the NBA team said they were impressed by Snøhetta's design strength and by AECOM's sports facility experience. The Norwegian/American firm has never **continued on page 2**

LA DOES AWAY WITH ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL PARKING REQUIREMENTS

## De-standardized Parking

Angelenos might soon see more street life and less stringent parking requirements in some of their neighborhoods.

In August the Los Angeles City Council voted to adopt a new planning tool dubbed the Modified Parking Requirement (MPR) District, which will allow parking regulations to be determined by specific location, rather than by a blanket citywide dictum.

“We can’t have a one-size-fits-all parking standard throughout the city,” said Tom Rothmann, the Los Angeles city planner in charge of **continued on page 7**

SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE:  
**RESTORING THE BALANCE**

AN ARCHITECT LED TEAM BREATHES LIFE BACK INTO MALIBU'S FRAGILE LAGOON WHILE OPENING IT UP TO RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL USES. **SEE PAGE 13–15**

CONTENTS

**06**  
BESTOR HIDES  
HOUSES

**08**  
MORPHOSIS  
GRABS  
PLATINUM

**22**  
CHIPPERFIELD  
CHATS ABOUT THE  
BIENNALE

**05** EAVESDROP

**17** CALENDAR

**20** MARKETPLACE



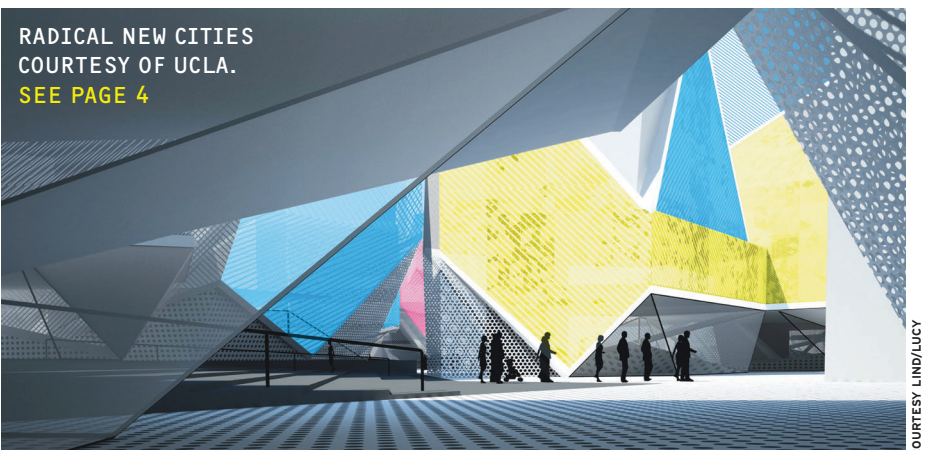
JUDGE MAKES UCLA HOLD ONTO  
ITS HANNAH CARTER GARDEN

## MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN?

Garden preservationists won a small victory in the fight to save Westwood's Hannah Carter Japanese Garden on July 27. A judge granted Carter's heirs a temporary injunction preventing the controversial sale of the Bel Air site by the garden's owner, UCLA. **continued on page 2**

RADICAL NEW CITIES  
COURTESY OF UCLA.

**SEE PAGE 4**





PUBLISHER

**Diana Darling**

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**William Menking**

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CIRCULATION ASSISTANT

**Ronni Tan**

EDITORIAL INTERNS

**Clara Freedman**

**Gabriel Fuentes**

**Jaclyn Hersh**

**Lisette Valdez**

CONTRIBUTORS

YOSH ASATO/ JAMES BRASUELL / NATE BERG / KENNETH CALDWELL / JENNIFER CATERINO / TIM CULVAHOUSE / JOANNE FURIO / MARISSA GLUCK / GREG GOLDIN / L.J. GORDON / GUNNAR HAND / ALAN HESS / AMARA HOLSTEIN / CARREN JAO / SAM HALL KAPLAN / JULIE KIM / LYDIA LEE/ ERIC LUM / ALLISON MILONIS/ JOHN PARMAN / JOHN PASTIER / TIBBY ROTHMAN / DIRK SUTRO / GREG TOWNSEND / ALISSA WALKER / MICHAEL WEBB / BETH WEINSTEIN

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BUILD YOUR OWN FUTURE

In my last editorial I lauded the creativity and research going into installation work in Los Angeles. But I also made clear that I don't consider this architecture. The point was to encourage architects to not only focus their efforts on creating beautiful gallery work, but on infiltrating the built world, changing it for the better.

What I didn't express clearly enough was just how difficult that can be.

The problem isn't just that architects are less interested in sweating and hustling and toiling, often fruitlessly, to get built work, especially with the economy still sputtering. It's that the built world isn't interested enough in them.

As I've alluded to before, our development, banking, and construction industries, and our government bureaucracy—all of which determine what gets built more than architects—are all stacked against design.

In real estate, a few small developers (in Los Angeles those include REthink, Heyday, and Casey Lynch, who is working with Barbara Bestor on a creative solution for a series of small lots in Echo Park, which we've profiled this month) are putting an emphasis on design. Their models don't require outsized profits to work. But they are far and away the exception to the rule. Bigger developers and Real Estate Investment Trusts (with some exceptions, of course, like Related Companies and CIM) simply don't factor design into their budgets, a fact that I've heard from several who work in the industry. It's too much upfront cost for not enough reward. Banks won't loan money to projects like this, even if developers were interested. Instead firms hire safe corporate firms that will give them safe corporate results. Have you ever taken a look at the Orsini, developer GH Palmer's Mediterranean monstrosity near Grand Avenue, on the northern edge of downtown? It's the same corporate thinking that gets us horrible chain restaurants and other mediocrities that reap high profits through cutting corners on quality.

In construction we see an industry that is unmistakably behemoth and incredibly slow to change. Old systems are deeply entrenched. There are exceptions here, too, like Matt Construction, C.W. Driver, and Morley Builders. But for the most part such businesses want to keep jobs in place and lock in profits—why would a national company like PCL Construction want to experiment with digital fabrication and advanced new forms when it would mean ceding expertise and money? Contractors and project managers now control much of the show, and they don't want that to change. In government, particularly in LA, the deck is still stacked in favor of huge firms that have the most entrenched government connections. The recent Sixth Street Bridge competition, juried by "design aesthetic advisory committee" of little design expertise, selected by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and area councilman Jose Huizar, chose firms that, while proposing exciting schemes, include only giants like HNTB, AECOM, and Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Of course getting to know the best players and systems in all of these fields is helpful. Another solution is to sidestep bankers, developers, bureaucrats, and even contractors altogether by doing it alone as an architect developer or going into design build. This can indeed work, and has, but it's costly, risky, and dependent on expertise that only a few architects have. Another solution is to seek out and partner with some of the emerging developers and progressive contractors who are interested in design. Another, which is being undertaken by tech-savvy firms like Gehry Technologies, is skewing control of digital project management in the hands of architects, who have the unique ability to orchestrate all the parts of a project. We can also continue to lobby government and business to improve their policies, but without the kind of money that talks in those circles, it's a tough battle.

What I want to know is what else works, or what will work. Once the economy gets going again this issue will be of utmost importance. I encourage you to send us suggestions and examples of how to make the case for good design and increase the influence of innovative architects. Send us ideas not just in written form, but even through visual representations. We want you to build, and we want your advice. It's a tough sell in a field that is consumed with form and technology. But I'm betting we can be as creative with our implementation as we can with our architectural ideas. **SAM LUBELL**

MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN continued from front page

The flap over the fate of the 1.5-acre Kyoto-style garden and adjacent house, which were given to UCLA in 1964 by Hannah and Edward Carter (Mr. Carter had been chair of the University of California Regents), started late last year when neighbors noticed appraisers poking around. Some even witnessed items being removed from the property, many of which were originally imported from Japan and had been there since the hillside garden was designed in 1959 and completed in 1961.

Carter's heirs were shocked to learn that in 2010, just a year after their mother's death, the cash-strapped university persuaded an Alameda County judge to overturn the university's contractual obligation to the Carter family to maintain the garden "in perpetuity." The property was then listed for \$14.7 million.

Community meetings, petitions, and letters to the university ensued and a coalition of six preservation organizations that includes the Los Angeles Conservancy, the Garden Conservancy, and The Cultural Landscape Foundation was formed. No one, including the heirs, could get the university to speak with them.

In May, Hannah Carter's five children filed a lawsuit against UCLA for breach of contract. They want the university to honor their commitment to preserve their mother's garden as an educational and artistic resource. "Unfortunately, there was no other choice," explained Hannah Carter's son Jonathan Caldwell, who is paying for the legal fees with his siblings. "We explored every opportunity we could to engage UCLA and they rebuffed us every time."

What has riled preservationists is UCLA's insistence that the garden, with elements like a Japanese teahouse, a black pebble beach, and a koi pond, has no educational value. UCLA declined to comment but released a statement that said: "During these challenging times, campus resources are best directed toward our academic mission, not toward maintaining a garden that serves no teaching or research purpose."

Charles Birnbaum, founder and president of the Washington D.C.-based Cultural Landscape Foundation, pointed out that not only does the university have a Landscape Architecture certificate program but the garden is considered seminal, as is its designer, landscape architect Nagao Sakurai. He added that Japanese gardens, especially in California, greatly influenced modernism. "This period is very under-represented in scholarship and Sakurai and the Hannah Carter Japanese Garden are a fertile field for such study," Birnbaum said.

Walter Moore, the attorney representing the Carter heirs, put it another way. "The deal said you have to maintain this work of art. It's just like giving the university a Matisse but the deal also said, don't destroy my Matisse," he said. "Nobody left a puppy on their doorstep. This was not an unsolicited gift, this was a contract."

With the injunction in place, the regents cannot sell the garden and must maintain it, at least through the end of the trial, which is scheduled for May 6, 2013. But Moore and the Carter heirs hope some kind of settlement can be reached before then to prevent a costly trial.

**STACIE STUKIN**

DOUBLE DUTY continued from front page

designed an arena, so the collaboration with AECOM was vital. The team beat out competitors that included SOM, Populous, NBBJ, Beyer Blinder Belle, HKS, HNTB, and 360 Architecture.

When the arena was first announced the ownership team released several conceptual renderings (not the work of Snøhetta/AECOM), which immediately generated both positive and negative reactions. Since then, Mayor Ed Lee has appointed a Citizens Advisory

Committee made up of local residents and businesses to get formalized input. Rick Welts, Warriors president, recently made the first of many presentations to that committee.

Craig Dykers, a Snøhetta principal known for his presentational skills, will lend credibility to the process, noted Warriors spokesperson P.J. Johnson. "He obviously has a highly attuned ear and his willingness to participate and interact with people is a huge asset."

No schedule has been developed for the design of the arena, although the Warriors

have stated their intention to open the 17,000 to 19,000-seat facility in time for the 2017–2018 NBA season. While an estimated budget has not been released, published reports have put the cost of the arena at \$450 million. The rehabilitation of Piers 30–32 is estimated at \$100 million. Warriors CEO Joe Lacob would not confirm those figures, but stated that the project will be privately financed without reliance on city funds or new taxes.

**GEORGE CALYS**



## FACEBOOK LIKES GEHRY

Perhaps trying to regain its mojo after a difficult summer on the stock market, Facebook has selected **Frank Gehry** to design an expansion to its Menlo Park Campus in California. The project, scheduled to break ground next year, will apparently include a quirky 420,000-square-foot warehouse topped by a sprawling garden. The cavernous space will contain open offices for as many as 2,800 software engineers, according to **Everett Katigbak**, Facebook's environmental design manager. The firm wouldn't reveal the project's price tag.

## DAN MEIS: COMMITMENT-PHOBE?

Sports architect **Dan Meis**, who has designed, among other projects, LA's Staples Center and Seattle's Safeco Field, is on the move yet again. In the span of just a few years he has shuffled from his own practice to Aedas, then back to his own firm to Populous, to his own firm again, and now he is joining Australian firm Woods Bagot Sport to become its global director. Exciting opportunities? Commitment issues? "For me it feels like I've been in the same practice all along. It just feels like I've been associated with a lot of firms," said Meis.

## AECOM IN TROUBLE IN LA?

Architecture, engineering, and construction giant AECOM is doing just fine. But it's LA architecture division apparently isn't. First, as we reported a few months ago, three of its principals jumped ship to start SOM's new LA office. Now we hear through the grapevine that the firm has laid off dozens in LA. Is the Death Star going down, or is this just a mirage?

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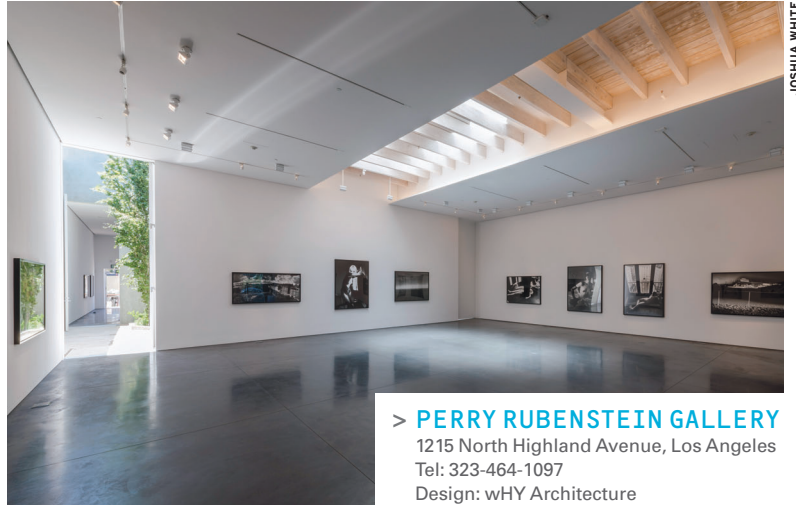
**GROWING THE FUTURE** continued from front page managed by the city's Community Redevelopment Agency. It has been taken over by LA's Department of Water and Power (DWP), and will contain the LA Clean Tech Incubator, a non-profit meant to foster clean-tech companies. The building will include 20 to 50 clean-tech companies, a job training center, a prototyping workshop, a DWP customer service center, and the DWP demand response demonstration laboratory, a facility that will house demonstrations of smart appliances and cars.

Taking advantage of the bow truss building's huge open spaces, JFAK's plans call for an open floorplan filled with interventions

**Above: The vast interior will include space for informal gatherings; below: the exterior will feature green walls.**

like sculptural office pods, conference rooms, an interior courtyard, and a large set of bleachers for presentations and informal gathering. Outside, the project will contain its own 1/2-acre park (the first in the Arts District), filled with sloped berms, curving pathways, drought resistant plantings, benches, tables, and, of course, wi-fi. Larger elements like an amphitheater and a central sun shade are dependent on future funding.

The project is set to be completed by the end of next year. **SL**



> **PERRY RUBENSTEIN GALLERY**  
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Design: wHY Architecture

Perry Rubenstein is the latest Manhattan art dealer to open in LA. He commissioned Kulapat Yantrasast, principal of wHY Architecture, to create an exemplary gallery on Highland Avenue, right in the middle of the city. On first sight, it could be a club: an enigmatic black box, with an unmarked door and two office windows screened with perforated metal. Inside, an expansive white room is bathed in natural light from a ceiling lantern. A knife-edge soffit is cut away to reveal the bone structure of bleached fir joists. A corner window frames an inner courtyard: a place to pause before continuing on to three smaller rooms. A roof garden for sculpture, installations, and events will be completed in October. It's an ideal complex for every kind of art, responsive to LA's light and climate, and to the gritty character of Hollywood. **MICHAEL WEBB**

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER SEPTEMBER 26, 2012

UCLA'S SUPRASTUDIO ONCE AGAIN PUSHES STUDENTS  
BEYOND THE NORM

AVA DOBRZYNSKA

## Outside Their Comfort Zone

As architecture schools continue to grapple with new challenges and emerging technologies a major question keeps surfacing: How can architects help design the space beyond the building envelope?

Perhaps the most rigorous exploration has been taking place at UCLA's MARCH program, Suprastudio, an advanced year-long graduate course that examines architecture's role in the urban environment. Past studios have been taught by Thom Mayne, whose students evaluated copious data from cities across the country, and

by Greg Lynn, who partnered with Walt Disney Imagineering to envision otherworldly new parks and facilities.

This year's course, taught by Neil Denari, focused on UCLA's own neighborhood, Westwood, using it as a base for rethinking how architecture and urbanism interact. This is Denari's second time teaching the studio. For his first studio he partnered with Toyota to envision future cities called "megavoids."

Over the course of a year Denari challenged teams of students to leave their architectural comfort zones. He asked them

to work at a much larger scale than they had been trained for as undergraduates and required them to start their process, not programmatically, but formally, and work backwards. The re-thinking of Westwood took into account major changes like the future addition of a subway station, but for the most part students started with a tabula rasa, filling it with their own graphic and urban interventions. At one review, Denari asked anyone holding on to concepts of piecemeal Jane Jacobs urbanism to leave the room.

But this wasn't an exercise in throwing away integrated planning and the hard lessons that emerged from brutal modernist planning. Students were challenged to form their own perspective and take their own route.

"We were trying to incorporate a new way of thinking that wasn't going to lead us down the same path," said Denari. "It was less about overturning paradigms and more about being able to incorporate logic across a whole spectrum of things."

That spectrum included elements as holistic as planning and as detailed as richly saturated graphics. All were carefully integrated to form a new type of urbanism that was neither organic nor modernist. The results were new neighborhoods that were all outside the mainstream of conventional urban thinking.

Daniel Hesketh and Jonathan Nadel's project *Remix City* focused on creating what Hesketh calls "endless possibilities." In other words, it included as much urban and architectural variety as possible using the least resources. Building modules were repeated, but in rotated or mirrored configurations across the site. The pieces, in turn, were suited

to varied programs and scales, but always emphasizing fine-grained, pedestrian-oriented activity, despite the large scale of building. We didn't want to fall into the trap of monumental scale or non-human plazas," he said.

Starting from a formal perspective was "more daunting than I ever could have imagined," said Hesketh. "We were floundering for a while, looking for something to work with. Our first instinct was to look at the catalogue of operations and parameters. In this case, you don't know where to start."

Of course the floundering was a big part of the course's challenge, according to Denari. "If you're operating with guarantees and securities we can't really find something. Generally I try to operate that way," he said, adding that the course's year-long format allows plenty of opportunities for students to make mistakes, get frustrated, and eventually have things fall into place like puzzle pieces.

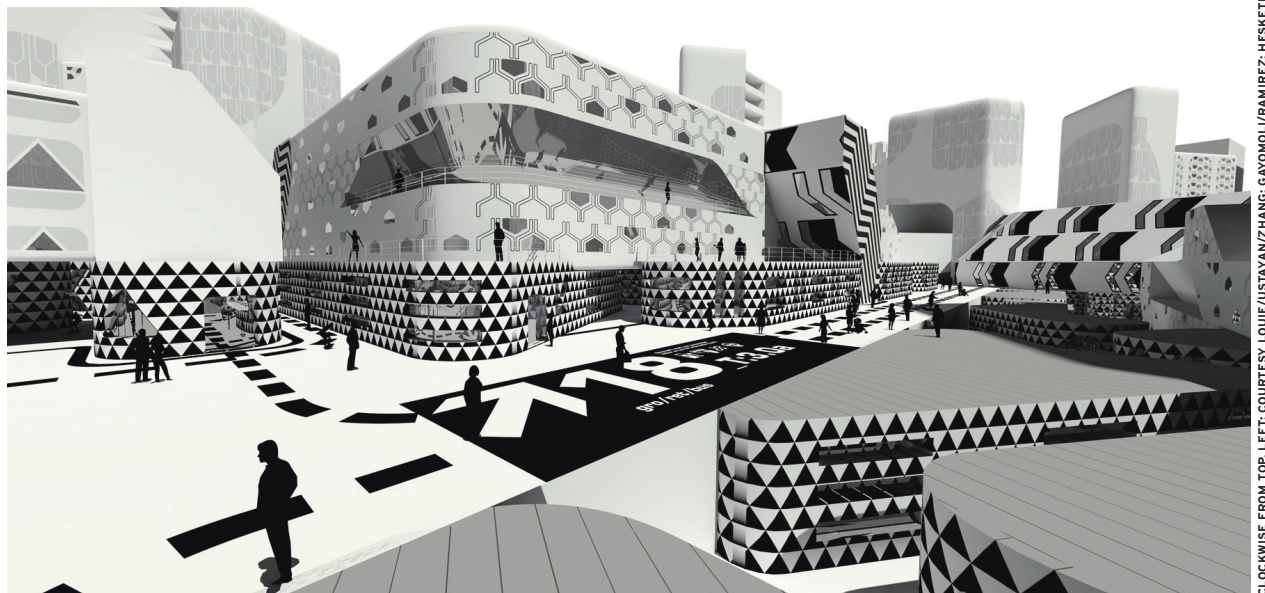
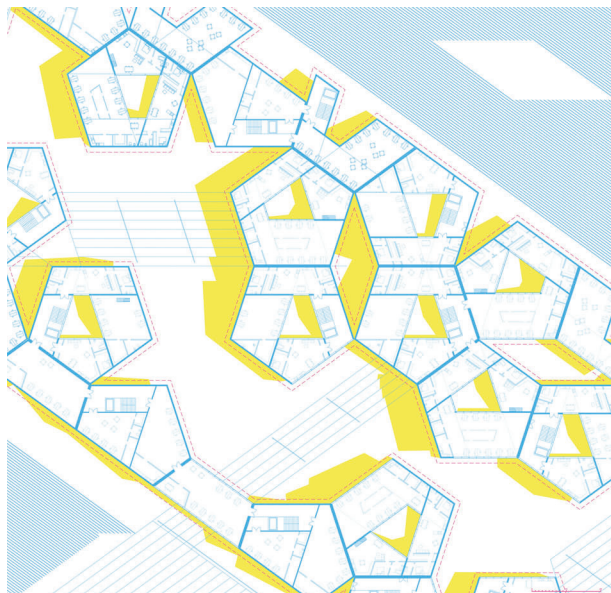
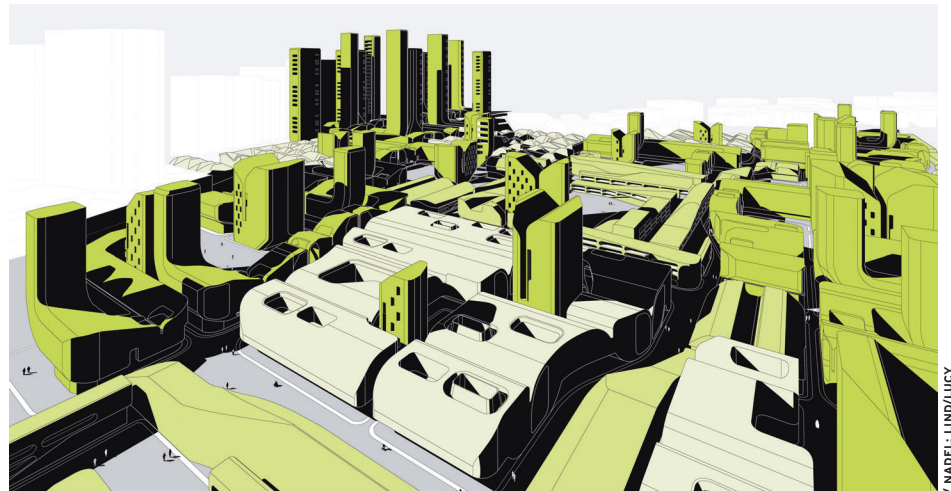
Lilit Ustayan, Chi Zhang, and Jonathan Louie's project, *The Continuous Environment: Applications on a 3D City*, started with Westwood's grid and investigated what form it would take if the automobile

were no longer the major means of circulation. Closer to Wilshire Boulevard, the project was about intricate interconnection, with pedestrian passages and smaller, more fragmented building forms. As one moves north toward the campus it became more block-like with bridges connecting eroded and coiled buildings.

By focusing on the urban environment the team developed a feedback-like organizing principal: They shaped their buildings via an urban plan, and shaped their urban plan via buildings. "We focus on the building scale and project outward," said Ustayan. "The process continually shifts between micro and macro scales. We continuously zoom in and out to test what we're designing. Maybe in terms of mass and geometry and form you may develop a strategy, but it's always testing it and not just accepting it."

"Modernism doesn't own alternative methods or abstraction," noted Denari. "Tools and agendas shouldn't be claimed and buried when phases pass. I think anything still becomes viable and I think the new and more supple arguments are ones that incorporate and exclude." **SL**

Clockwise from top left: Students presenting their work; projects by Jonathan Gayomoli, Ryan Ramirez; Dan Hesketh, Jonathan Nadel; Adam Lind, Brent Lucy; Jonathan Louie, Lilit Ustayan, Chi Zhang.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, LEFT: COURTESY LOUIE/USTAYAN/ZHANG; GAYOMOLI/RAMIREZ; HESKETH/ NADEL; LIND/LUCY





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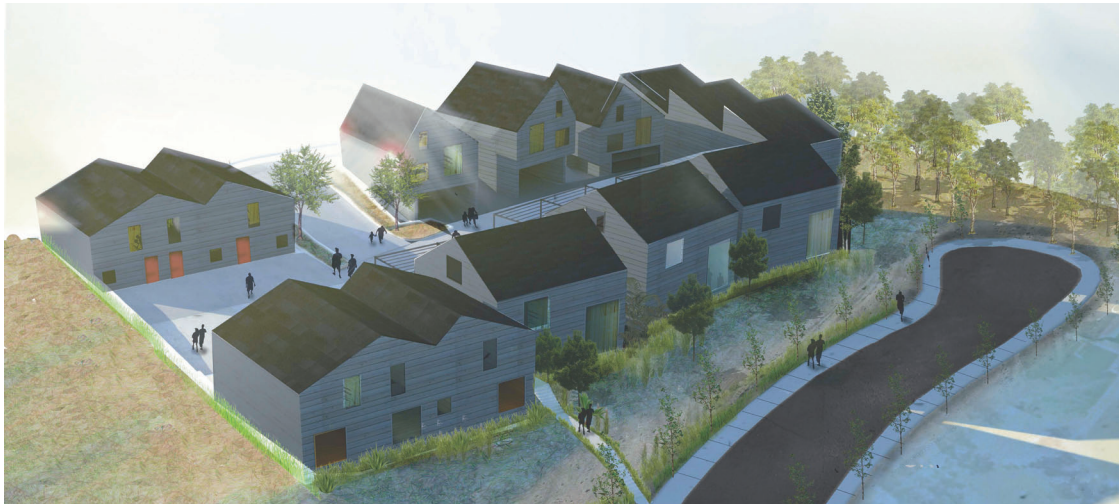


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BARBARA BESTOR'S BLACKBIRDS GIVES A SINGLE-FAMILY LOOK TO HIGH-DENSITY HOUSING THAT PUTS PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS FIRST

## STEALTH DENSITY

With the help of LA's 2004 Small Lot Ordinance, which allows developers to build single-family homes and detached townhouses on a single lot originally zoned for multi-family housing or commercial development, LocalConstruct and architect Barbara Bestor are hoping to turn a one-acre hillside parcel in Echo Park into a prime example of smart growth.

"We felt that there were few

existing projects that took advantage of the ordinance's potential," said Casey Lynch, LocalConstruct co-founder. He and his partner Mike Brown started the company in 2009 with a focus on "green retrofits" for distressed apartment buildings and homes in Los Angeles.

The plan for Blackbirds—located between the neighborhood's Preston and Vestal avenues—calls for 18 small-lot homes clustered around

an internal living street designed after the Dutch Woonerf concept, where pedestrians and cyclists have priority. The project's unusual rooflines and its resulting configuration reminded developers of birds surrounding a pond, which gave rise to the development's unusual name. Blackbirds will consist of three 1,800-square-foot single-family homes, three side-by-side 1,400-square-foot duplexes and

three side-by-side 1,300 square-foot-triplexes.

"Their density is similar to the fabric of housing around them. The trick visually is that some of the units are in duplex or triplex configurations but still appear similar to unique houses, a sort of 'stealth density,'" said Bestor, who up until now had always worked on single-family residences.

Also intriguing is the focus on a less car-centric lifestyle at Blackbirds. Lynch adds that some units will also be "un-garaged." Carports or open parking spaces will be placed strategically around the internal living street, which would leave more open space on the site. "We think that is a needed step in the evolution of LA typologies," said Lynch.

"I am curious as to why larger scale housing projects so often have a lower level of finish and stultifying repetitiveness given their prices," commented Bestor. "We are

attempting to add quality and individuality to each of these units as well as a structure engendering community and neighborliness in the way they are grouped together."

An initial presentation to the Echo Park Neighborhood Council garnered the usual concerns of increased traffic and parking congestion due to added density, but also notes of approval at the development's utopian impulses.

Blackbirds is finalizing its schematics and the possible changes discussed include further reducing the density of the development, adding traffic safety measures, and access to lower streets for parking. A construction start date is dependent on a Zoning Administration hearing, but LocalConstruct is targeting construction to begin by the end of 2012 with units completed by late 2013. **CARREN JAO**

BARBARA BESTOR ARCHITECTS

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**DE-STANDARDIZED PARKING** continued  
from front page formulating the MPR District.

New districts, which must measure at least five acres or two block faces, can be proposed by City Council, the Planning Commission, the Planning Department, or any individual, and will require signatures from at least 75 percent of owners or lessees of the proposed district's properties.

Districts can contain any of seven specified parking strategies, allowing architects and developers to be more creative in their approach to parking requirements. "Right now, if you want to build an interesting building on a tiny or a weirdly configured lot, you cannot do that unless you get a variance," said Rothmann. "If you build a 100-unit building in downtown LA, you have to provide 200 parking spaces. MPR Districts would change that. It encourages more creative architecture."

Under the proposed new districts, options include: provide off-site parking up to 1,500 feet away; request fewer parking spaces on a project; decrease parking; increase parking; retain previous parking standards despite a change of use; establish a commercial parking credit system in which those with excess spaces can sell credits to businesses to meet requirements; or set maximum parking limits.

Before passing City Council, the MPR had to overcome the concerns of affordable housing advocates, who feared that further decreasing parking requirements would lessen the incentive to build rent-stabilized units, which already have less stringent parking requirements. In response, projects taking advantage of density bonus incentives are entitled to even lower parking requirements than those set in an MPR District.

Neighborhoods with a specific plan are also exempt from MPR Districts, given that specific plans already allow residents full zoning flexibility. "We didn't want to confuse the issue by having an overlay on top of an overlay. If they want to increase or reduce their parking, they can do that anyway," said Rothmann.

The city planning department already has a few candidate areas to test out this new planning tool. Prime candidate districts include: the Broadway district downtown, between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Olympic Boulevard; and Van Nuys Boulevard in Van Nuys.

Creating an MPR District along Broadway—a historic district—could mean older buildings could potentially be converted to new uses without having to invest in expensive parking. In Van Nuys, vacant old storefronts could finally be used by new businesses through, perhaps, a commercial parking credit system. But these are only speculations, clarified Rothmann, the next step is to really look at the needs of the community and determine what the actual parking requirements are. The flexibility of MPR Districts could mean a new day for architecture in the city, one that isn't straitjacketed by the city's parking norms.

CJ

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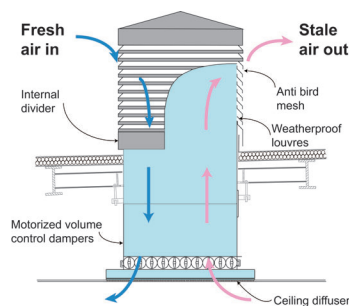
THE SCIENCE  
OF COMFORT



Sculpture: Gyre, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art



ARCHITECTS: MORPHOSIS  
ENGINEERS: BURO HAPPOLD



## RESOURCES:

### Environmental Consultants

*BB&J Group*  
[bbjgroup.com](http://bbjgroup.com)

### MEP

*Buro Happold*  
[burohappold.com](http://burohappold.com)

### Solar

*Permacity*  
[permacity.com](http://permacity.com)

### Structural Engineer

*John A. Martin Associates*  
[johnmartin.com](http://johnmartin.com)

### Window Wall

*Walters & Wolf*  
[waltersandwolf.com](http://waltersandwolf.com)

Clockwise from top left: A view into the conference room, which opens completely to the courtyard; a drawing of how the rooftop windcatchers pull in fresh air and force out stale air; the two-story office's ceiling is marked with several square skylights; the entryway's fabricated metallic screen.

While Morphosis is known for their jagged steel surfaces and off-center forms, the firm has always been interested in sustainability. The ultimate representation of this thinking is its own new office in Culver City, which is the largest net-zero energy building in Los Angeles, and one of the greenest offices in the country.

The fairly rectangular structure, located just a few feet from the new light rail Expo Line's elevated tracks in Culver City, gets most of its energy from photovoltaics—a 2,800-square-foot array sitting on top of a shaded parking canopy outside. But what makes it all work are the energy savings: It significantly reduces loads

through several low-tech, high-tech, and even revolutionary techniques, most of which were developed with engineers at Buro Happold, whose LA offices are just down the street.

On top of the two-story building's angled roof are four windcatchers, a technology adapted from ancient desert environments. Their high-tech iteration, produced by a company called Monodraught, has never before been employed in the United States. Essentially they are louvered steel boxes containing interior cross blades that allow air into the building, and, through the pressure built up on the far side of each blade, pull hot air

up the other side. A digital sensor system (powered by photovoltaics) decides when to open the louvers and set the system in motion. It also keeps the louvers open at night, so cool air can flush out the space before the next work day.

To limit solar heat gain the building's east and south facades are solid. And further limiting the impact of the sun, even when it comes in at a low angle, a series of acrylic and galvanized steel shades cover the building's sun-facing edges to create a pleasant outdoor gathering space for employees. The shades, which jut dramatically from the building's core, also serve as testing zone

for future projects, and are currently fitted with mock-ups of the panels from Morphosis' Emerson College building in Hollywood, currently in development.

Thanks to the windcatchers, large openings in the building's façade that let in breezes, and to the solar shielding, the firm never really turns on the ultra-efficient air conditioning system that's also built in. They rarely turn on lights during the day either. Sitting on the roof near the windcatchers are 16 square skylights. To soften their light they're lined with acrylic diffusers, which bounce the harsh light, creating an almost museum-quality gentleness inside. To supplement

this each skylight is fitted along its edges with fluorescent lights. The firm hopes to eventually install custom shades to further control the quality of light that enters the space, but they don't appear to be missed.

All in all for such a sophisticated result, it's an incredibly simple design. And that's exactly the point, said David Herd, principal at Buro Happold. "You can walk into this space and immediately understand what's happening."

See net zero isn't that hard, is it? **SL**



IWAN BAAH



**CHANGE ON THE HORIZON** continued from front page if a innovations to justify changes to these requirements.

Deputy Fire Chief Mark Stormes has assembled officials from the Fire Department and the Department of Building and Safety, local architects, and public safety consultants to report on possible changes to the regulations. Stormes described the group as a “bunch of bright people with good ideas in the field of design and structural engineering,” who will hopefully “do away with the perception that we aren’t willing to listen.” The working group so far seems to be living up to its title, having already met on several occasions in recent weeks.

The working group grew out of an effort to overhaul the LAFD’s 1970s fire code, a process that closed for public comment in June. According to the department’s website, the new code will be “less complicated for developers and users, and be more consistent with state code requirements.

Some city entities are already clearing the way for high-rise innovation in the hopes that the helipad requirement will be amended. The recently adopted Hollywood Community Plan (HCP), for instance, included policy LU.2.9.C, which asks planners to “support architectural innovation and dynamic roof forms while balancing life safety issues in consultation with the Fire Department.” But the HCP can only make policy recommendations. Only a change to the fire code can allow this type of architectural innovation.

In a more direct form of political pressure, Councilmember Jose Huizar, who represents most of Downtown LA, recently wrote a letter asking Chief Cummings to rethink the helipad requirement as the department updates the fire code. “Perhaps the process of adopting a new fire code presents an opportunity for the LAFD to modernize its approach to construction and consider amending policies to provide alternatives to the helipad/heliport policy,” wrote Huizar.

The LAFD reacted quickly to Huizar’s letter by forming the working group within two weeks of his request, but the department has yet to reveal its intentions. There are reasons to think that the requirement is likely to stay at least partially intact: Stormes’ explanation of his goals for the working group—“to blend the needs of commanders and the concept of rooftop operations in the event of the rare incident where

fire suppression systems and evacuation routes are compromised”—implies that at least part of the helipad requirement will survive changes to the code. The department has also already invested about \$100 million dollars in helicopter technology and training, which it doesn’t want to waste.

Compromise could be possible, however. According to Nathan Wittasek, a building codes expert at engineering and scientific consultancy, Exponent, and a member of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, the working group could explore small changes to the helipad requirement that would “leave the main requirement intact, but give the chief some leeway to look at other options that could allow for custom solutions for each building.”

Wittasek advocates for firefighter elevators and occupant evacuation elevators as “potentially better uses of limited resources” in high rises than helipads. Both are designed with pressurization systems and “enhanced passive barriers” that control for the impacts of smoke and water, protecting them during an emergency. He adds that some cities have found ways to improve the use of stairs for emergency evacuations. For instance, following 9/11, revisions to the New York City Building Code required larger, more dispersed stairways with advanced way-finding technology. Wittasek points to studies showing that the use of elevators and stairs during a firefighter-assisted evacuation greatly decreases evacuation times from buildings over 40 stories tall. Although fire safety experts can quantify the benefits of firefighter-assisted evacuation via elevators and stairs, information about the benefits of helipad evacuations has not been collected. “They’re just not used as much,” he said.

Stormes said that the process of amending the fire code could take up to a year. Meanwhile, the architectural form of at least one high-rise project stands to benefit from potential changes to the helipad requirement. Earlier this month, AC Martin began circulating new renderings for its Wilshire Grand office and hotel project, approved for the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Figueroa streets. Although the original plans have been scaled back, the current renderings feature a slanted roof that would require a novel approach to the helipad requirement.

**JAMES BRASUELL**

## AT DEADLINE

### BRIDGE VISIONS

The three teams shortlisted for LA’s Sixth Street Viaduct competition presented their plans to audiences in LA in mid September. The original 3,500-foot-long structure, a famous rounded Art Deco span designed in 1932, has been deemed unsalvageable due to irreversible decay, and in April the city’s Bureau of Engineering called for a competition to design a new \$400 million cable stayed structure. All three teams presented plans that not only showcased memorable forms, but embraced people-friendly designs, including pedestrian paths, parks, and connections to the river below.

### DENARI’S BOLD FORMS BOUND FOR TAIWAN

Neil Denari Architects have won the competition everyone is talking about: the Keelung Harbor Service Project international competition in Taiwan. According to the competition’s website the \$140 million project will become the “Gateway to the Nation,” developing unused waterfront land into a passenger and cargo terminal, a transfer station, an arts plaza, and a wharf for more industrial activity.

Denari’s plan consists of carved out metallic-skinned masses floating on thin bases above raised plazas. Surfaces are textured with graphic components including angular window patterns and lime green and powder blue splashes of color. The curved buildings interconnect forming internal courtyards and, at one point, a huge framed view onto the waterfront.



project: Giant Yellow Teddy Bear    artist: Urs Fischer    stone: High Ridge Granite sculpture base pieces, flamed finish

slate    quartzite    limestone    marble    granite    sandstone    basalt

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# TURN UP THE HEAT

The latest kitchen cooktops are strong, streamlined, stand-alone units built to last. **By Perrin Drumm**

## 1 UNIQUE EGGERSMANN

Using the same slate for the cabinet fronts, plinth, channel, worktop, and sink is what gives Unique its seamless look. Units come in 18 different stone finishes as well as Corian, and can be made in varying lengths and customized with cabinets, panels, pull-outs, and seating areas. [egggermannusa.com](http://egggermannusa.com)

## 2 ANIMA CABINET BINOVA

The integrated, motorized, double-sided cabinet can be raised for access to prep tools and cookware and lowered for a clutter-free kitchen and larger workspace. It's large enough to house tableware and utensils, as well as TV monitors, DVD readers, and even a mobile bar. [binova.it/eng](http://binova.it/eng)

## 3 K20 BOFFI

The rigorous aesthetic of the k20 introduces new materials (Corian, melamine, aluminum, and steel) into the Norbert Wangen collection, as well as integrated lighting and organizers, a flush-fit stovetop and a wrap-around finish for a more streamlined unit. [boffi.com](http://boffi.com)

## 4 HEART OF GOLD STEININGER

A new design concept is based on four modules available in stone, concrete, and ceramic that allow buyers to create their own perfect kitchen, customizing the dimensions of their workspace, storage, washing, and food prep areas. Interior lit drawers with magnetic dividers are lined with its namesake anodized golden aluminum. [steininger-designers.at](http://steininger-designers.at)

## 5 DC10 ROSSANA

Vincenzo De Cotiis chose burnished brass for its durability as well as its scientific connotations, transforming the kitchen into a serious cooking lab, albeit a very refined one. Brass complements wood and stone finishings, doors slide or pop open elegantly with a soft click. [rossana.com](http://rossana.com)

## 6 LACUCINA ALESSI VALCUCINE

Minimalist but not reductive, Wiel Arets' polished, joint-free cook station was designed specifically for the contract market. Made in Corian Glacier White with rounded edges and corners, LaCucinaAlessi comes in three versions: single island, two-column island, and a wall unit, all of which are customizable. [valcucine.com](http://valcucine.com)



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battery, Zone 3.



"I'll replace  
the battery  
first thing  
tomorrow  
morning."



Afternoon  
Sunlight  
Detected:  
Lower  
blinds.



"That's my  
cue. Time for  
my coffee  
break."



"Plenty of  
sun out to  
generate  
power."



Energy Status:  
Solar power  
generation  
activated.



Greywater  
Storage: 63%  
capacity.



"Class, let's get  
ready to water  
the roof-top  
garden."



Update: Floor  
unoccupied.  
Reduce  
lighting.



"It's a nice day  
out. We're  
heading to  
the park."



"Checking in  
remotely on  
our home  
energy usage."



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# Restoring the Balance

Architects lead a new vision for the complex, and controversial, Malibu Lagoon Restoration Project. By Guy Horton.



TIMOTHY BARRETT / RCDMM

**Above:** Bird's-eye view of the lagoon, which will be returned to its original shape.



To understand the Malibu Lagoon Restoration Project it helps to keep in mind some images that embody the complexity of a proposal in one of California's most delicate and contested environments. These include bulldozers idling on white sand, white-throated swifts gliding overhead, reeds, protestors, news vans, celebrity activists, biologists in hats walking through mud, surfers running across Pacific Coast Highway in wetsuits, steelhead trout, silt, stagnant water, and lastly, eggs. The importance of the egg cannot be underesti-

mated here. In fact, the egg is perhaps the perfect symbol for the lagoon.

Someone who understands all of these elements is Clark Stevens, the lead architect on what just might be one of the most ecologically-sensitive and politically-contentious projects in the state, if not the country. Stevens has been involved with the restoration project since its inception more than 10 years ago and has seen all of these things and more leading up to the commencement of the work that began with those idling bulldozers moving tentatively

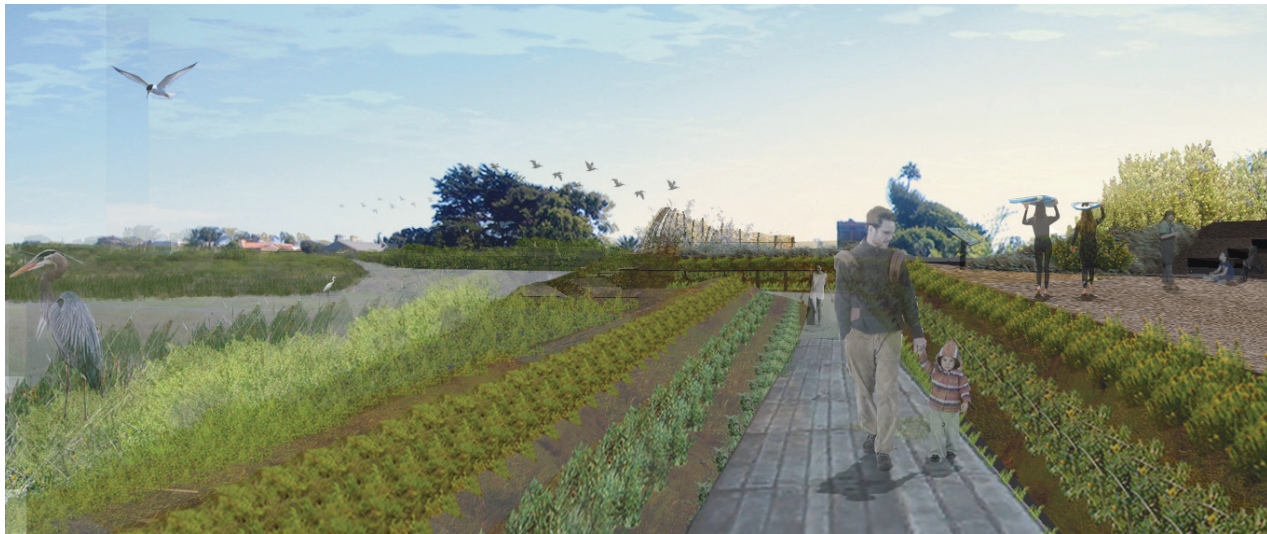




TIMOTHY BARRETT/RCDSMM

**Above and Below:** Changes will make the lagoon accessible via viewing platforms, bridges and walking paths, while also restoring it to a healthy state.

**Opposite page, above:** Schematic design for overlook platforms; **Below:** Section through the lagoon's new Winter Platform, which will become submerged in the summertime.



RICHARD SCOTT

forward on June 1.

The goal of the project is to restore the natural balance of the lagoon by returning it to its original shape and to enhance the way visitors experience it. To hear Stevens talk about it one might think he is an environmental scientist, biologist, ornithologist, and hydrologist. As the architect he has had to wear all of these hats at one time or another. He is the one who, through design, has harnessed all of these disciplines to create a vision of what Malibu Lagoon can become. Architecture is playing a leading role in determining its future.

For the last 20 years many scientists and environmental groups, such as Heal the Bay and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, have regarded the lagoon as a threatened ecosystem. Though it looked healthy, it has quietly morphed into a degraded condition. Excess fill from the construction of the Pacific Coast Highway, a local baseball diamond, and other construction projects has been dumped into the lagoon over the past decades.

All this extra earth eventually changed the shape of the channel, disrupting the natural flows between creek and ocean. Over time this silting action severely altered the lagoon's delicate chemistry. The stagnation of water and increased acidity in turn threatened the diversity of life at all levels of the ecosystem, from the mud-flats to the sky above. It is thought that more than 295 species of birds call the lagoon home.

The lagoon is one of the last remaining in California—most have been irreversibly altered by development. Richard Ambrose, professor of Environmental Health Science at UCLA, in a recent interview on LA radio station KPCC, described how it is actually considered an “impaired waterway” by many in the scientific community.

Despite this, the effort to restore the lagoon has been challenged by a vociferous, celebrity-backed opposition that until recently kept the project in litigation. Though there is no scientific evidence to support this theory, those who have opposed the project assert that it will kill the lagoon—and perhaps more important to local surfers,

the great waves at Surfrider Beach, which the estuary flows into. For the first part of this summer small groups of protestors could be seen along Pacific Coast Highway (ironically the same road that was the source of much of the debris that went into the lagoon) holding cardboard signs.

Stevens, who spent his boyhood exploring the woods of Northern Michigan, cares a lot about the lagoon. He credits his outdoor adventures and Roger Tory Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* as the original motivations for working with nature in such an engaged way. His ideas were clarified further through working with Michael Rotondi. “When I was principal/partner at RoTo Architecture in the mid-90s I first saw the potential to link design with the conservation of ecologically and culturally critical landscapes,” Stevens recalled.

The lagoon is where Malibu Creek, the sea, and the coastal landscape all interact to support a rich array of wildlife and flora. Their habitat will be restored through recontouring the channel and returning it to its original shape. This is the civil engineering part of the project, or phase one, and the foundation upon which the architecture, phase two, will be built.

The architecture on the site consists of an interpretive pathway that runs along and even down into part of the lagoon. When it is complete there will be tidal viewing platforms, outdoor classrooms, and site-specific installations, all designed to communicate the story of the lagoon. The pathway and its stations all seem to emerge from the deepest parts of the natural habitat and engage the seasonal water cycle of the estuary.

This architectural intervention restores how humans relate to the land, water, and sky along this part of the coast. As Stevens explained, “This pathway is unique because it draws people down into the different levels of the environment to experience it up-close rather than hovering above.” Part of the restoration involved removing the old wooden bridge that kept visitors elevated above the lagoon.

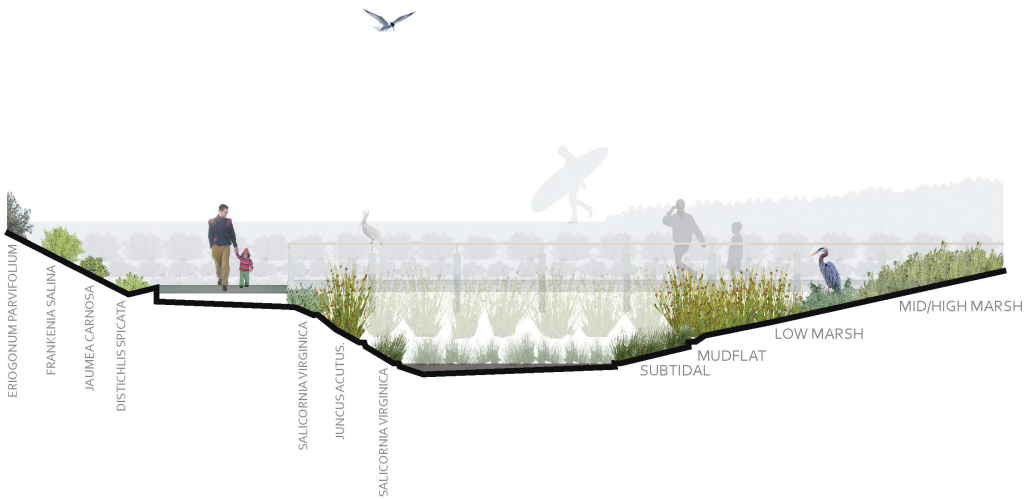
As the design team learned about the complex science





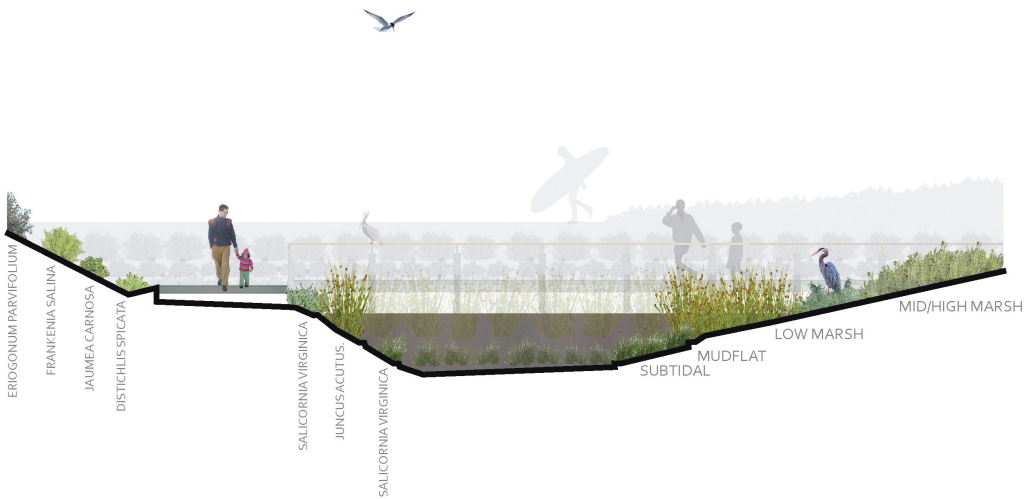
COURTESY BUNCH DESIGN

Section through winter platform  
Water level at 1 foot.



ELEVATION (ft)  
11  
10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1  
0

Water level at 4.5 feet.



ELEVATION (ft)  
11  
10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1  
0

TIMOTHY BARRETT/RCDSMM

of the lagoon they found inspiration to do different things with the pathway. The architects, in collaboration with biologists and environmental scientists working with California State Parks, were able to achieve a balance between use and preservation. From Stevens' perspective, access is critical. "When people have access they can learn about the lagoon and it will become more important to them. They will pass that on to others," he adds. But they learned that the design does not need to penetrate very far into the habitat in order for it to be effective as a teaching tool.

When forming the design team, Stevens called in long-time collaborators Bo Sundius and Hisako Ichiki, the husband-and-wife team behind multidisciplinary firm Bunch Design, who both worked with Stevens at RoTo. "What immediately drew me into the project was its narrative potential," said Sundius. "I'm interested in the story the architecture can tell and how people progress through that as a sequence of experiences." This narrative, instructive quality is something he helped develop into an overall story of the lagoon. This is the result of a close reading of the environment, of listening. The architecture then materializes as an extension, delicately inserted into the wild as gestures that wave people in, whereupon they are positioned to make discoveries along the path.

Rather than just employing signage with explanatory text and way-finding devices, the architecture reacts to and engages natural processes. One section of the interpretive path employs a ramp that connects two viewing areas, the Winter Platform and the Summer Amphitheater. In winter, when the estuary is open to the tides, this ramp provides access to the Winter Platform. In summer, when the creek flow diminishes and a natural sand berm forms at the mouth of the estuary, the water level gradually rises up the winter platform access ramp—symbolically called the Summer Clock—while the Winter Platform becomes submerged.

Because its incline is so gradual, users of the lagoon will be able to mark the daily progression. Water will advance up the ramp nearly four feet, making a normally invisible process measurable.

Another element, the Bird Blind, is designed to become a topiary, coaxing willows from the wetland edge to fill in its woven-steel structure, and thus sheltering

an outdoor teaching and viewing area. Visitors will be able to see through openings in the willows without being seen by the birds of the lagoon.

And this is where the eggs re-enter the picture. "During the design process, at some point, there was this sense of a scale shift," said Ichiki. She goes on to describe how she envisioned people by this canopy being like birds in a nest. Then she imagined people sitting on eggs, not just random eggs, but the eggs specific to the species found in the lagoon. This is how the egg seating came to be. They will be made out of pigmented concrete and matched to real eggs found in the habitat.

"I tend to view architecture as part of the environment, like a total work of art," said Ichiki.

Now handling the construction administration of the project, Ichiki is on site once a week and responding to requests for information daily. "As you might imagine, the meetings get very interesting when you have contractors, scientists, naturalists, and architects in the same room," she said, emphasizing the amount of care going into each specific move as the restoration advances. "Of course there is a schedule, but sometimes eggs and other wildlife need to be moved to another part of their habitat."

This winter, when the project is completed, the pathways will open, the tides will advance and recede over the ramp, and Malibu Lagoon will start to once again tell its own story.

**GUY HORTON IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.**



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SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY 26

LECTURES

**From Head to Heart to Hand: Architectural Place Making in the Digital Age**  
6:00 p.m.  
Gin D. Wong  
Conference Center  
3551 Trousdale Pkwy.  
Los Angeles  
arch.usc.edu

**Design with the Other 90%: Cities Craft Perspective Lecture:**  
**Cynthia E. Smith**  
6:30 p.m.  
The Lab  
Museum of Contemporary Craft  
724 NW Davis St.  
Portland, OR  
mocc.pnca.edu

**Peter Zellner: Practices & Projects**  
7:00 p.m.  
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall  
960 East Third St.  
Los Angeles  
sciarc.edu

**Asian American Architects: History and Present**  
7:30 p.m.  
California College of the Arts  
1111 Eighth St.  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

EVENT

**Buck Institute Tour**  
10:00 a.m.  
8001 Redwood Blvd.  
Novato, CA  
aiasf.org

THURSDAY 27

EVENT

**Closing Night Party Featuring GOOD Design**  
6:00 p.m.  
Autodesk  
1 Market St.  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

LECTURE

**Roger Trancik: 25 Years of Finding Lost Space**  
5:30 p.m.  
Jaqua Academic Center  
Harrington Room  
1615 East 13th Ave.  
Eugene, OR  
aaa.uoregon.edu

FRIDAY 28

EVENT

**Bridge to Bridge Boat Tour**  
3:00 p.m.  
San Francisco Ferry Building  
aiasf.org

LECTURE

**Department of Architecture Guest Speaker Series Fridays@4**  
4:00 p.m.  
Portland State University  
Shattuck Hall Annex  
1914 Southwest Park Ave.  
Portland, OR  
pdx.edu/architecture

SATURDAY 29

EVENTS

**Tour: Urban Agriculture in Unlikely Places**  
10:30 a.m.  
Glide Memorial Church  
330 Ellis St.  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

**Tour: Site, Sculpture, Shoreline: Discover the Olympic Sculpture Park**  
1:00 p.m.  
PACCAR Pavilion  
Olympic Sculpture Park  
2901 Western Ave.  
Seattle, WA  
seattleartmuseum.org

**Mid-Century Modern in Diamond Heights**  
3:00 p.m.  
St. Aidan's Episcopal Church  
101 Gold Mine Dr.  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

OCTOBER

MONDAY 1

EVENT

**Rethinking Shelter: Master of Architecture Student Exhibition**  
11:00 a.m.  
Mercy Corps.  
28 SW First Ave.  
Portland, OR  
pdx.edu/architecture

TUESDAY 2

EVENT

**Ben Kinmont: Into the Archives**  
11:00 a.m.  
Koret Visitor Education Center  
SFMOMA  
151 Third St.  
San Francisco  
sfmoma.org

WEDNESDAY 3

LECTURE

**Integrating Fire Safety Design to Meet Architectural Goals**  
ALA San Francisco  
130 Sutter St.  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

THURSDAY 4

LECTURE

**Portland State of Mind: A Lecture by Architect Dan Wood of WORKac**  
6:00 p.m.  
Shattuck Hall Annex  
1914 Southwest Park Ave.  
Portland, OR  
pdx.edu/architecture

FRIDAY 5

EXHIBITION OPENING

**Eero Saarinen**  
6:00 p.m.  
Architecture and Design Museum  
6032 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles  
aplusd.org

SUNDAY 7

WITH THE KIDS

**Pumpkin Lifts: Ingenuity Lab**  
12:00 p.m.  
Lawrence Hall of Science  
UC Berkeley  
1 Centennial Dr.  
Berkeley, CA  
ucberkeley.org

EVENT

**Classical Architectural Interiors Summit**  
10:00 a.m.  
Ann Sacks Showroom  
2 Henry Adams St.  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

MONDAY 8

LECTURES

**2012-2013 Graduate Visiting Artist Lecture Series: Sina Najafi**  
6:30 p.m.  
Swigert Commons  
1241 Northwest Johnson St.  
Portland, OR  
cal.pnca.edu

**Architecture Lecture Series: Hunter Tura of Bruce Mau Design**  
7:00 p.m.  
Timken Lecture Hall  
San Francisco Campus  
California College of The Arts  
cca.edu

WEDNESDAY 10

LECTURE

**Patrik Schumacher: Parametric Semiology**  
7:00 p.m.  
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall  
960 East Third St.  
Los Angeles, CA  
sciarc.edu

FRIDAY 12

LECTURE

**The Architecture of Julia Morgan and Sacred Spaces**  
7:30 p.m.  
San Francisco Zen City Center  
300 Page St.  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

MONDAY 15

LECTURE

**Architecture Lecture Series: Jeffery Inaba, INABA**  
7:00 p.m.  
Timken Lecture Hall  
California College of the Arts  
1111 Eighth St.  
San Francisco  
cca.edu

TUESDAY 16

LECTURE

**Achim Menges: "Material Computation"**  
6:30 p.m.  
White Stag Building  
70 Northwest Couch St.  
Portland, OR  
aaa.uoregon.edu

WEDNESDAY 17

LECTURE

**Charles Correa: Propositions**  
7:00 p.m.  
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall  
960 East Third St.  
Los Angeles  
sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 18

LECTURES

**NCARB & You: IDP, ARE & Certification**  
5:30 p.m.  
AIA San Francisco  
130 Sutter St.  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

**The Modern Work of Gardner Dailey**  
5:30 p.m.  
Pier 1  
The Embarcadero  
San Francisco  
aiasf.org

EVENT

**Studio Tour: Hello Design Hello Design Studio**  
10305 Jefferson Blvd.  
Culver City, CA  
aigalosangeles.org

LECTURE

**The 2010 Matsui Lecture: The Seeds of Our 21st Century Transportation Network: A Retrospective of Sixty Years of Policymaking**  
4:00 p.m.  
Sutardja Dai Hall,  
Banatao Auditorium  
UC Berkeley  
133 Doe Library  
Berkeley, CA  
berkeley.edu

FRIDAY 19

EVENT

**Broadening the Perspective of Technology in Architectural Practice**  
8:00 a.m.  
Stanford University  
Center for Integrated Facility Engineering  
450 Serra Mall  
Stanford, CA  
aiasf.org

SATURDAY 20

EVENTS

**Celebrating Architect Julia Morgan**  
10:00 a.m.  
UC Berkley Extension Room 204  
Art and Design Center  
95 Third St.  
San Francisco  
berkeley.edu

Film Screening:

**Collage in Motion**  
5:00 p.m.  
LACMA  
Bing Theater  
5905 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles  
lacma.org

SUNDAY 21

LECTURE

**Architecture Lecture Series: Manuel DeLanda**  
12:00 p.m.  
Nave  
California College of The Arts  
San Francisco Campus  
1111 Eighth St.  
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cca.edu

TUESDAY 23

LECTURE

**Moving to Work**  
12:30pm  
SPUR Urban Center  
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Naoya Hatakeyoma's award winning photography contrasts the reciprocal impact of human industries on the natural world and that of natural forces on human activities. His photographs, ranging in topic from German coalmines to the underground Tokyo sewer systems, chronicle manmade industrial formations from their time of creation to their degeneration and ultimate decay, all captured in a seemingly objective yet sublime manner. Through this impartial method, devoid of speculation and sentiment, Hatakeyoma's images garner the greatest impression on the viewer. Hatakeyoma was born in Rikuzentakata in Iwate Prefecture in 1958. His latest work, *Rikuzentakata* illustrates the devastation caused by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in his birthplace. In the first ever solo U.S museum exhibition, curated by Lisa J. Sutcliffe, SFMOMA showcases more than 100 photographs and 2 video installations spanning Hatakeyoma's entire career.



ART GRAY

LAYER: A LOOSE HORIZON

Pasadena Museum of California Art  
490 East Union Street  
Pasadena, CA  
Through October 14, 2012

While digital design and fabrication continue to transform architecture, architect/artists Lisa Little and Emily White have decided to challenge these trends. Although digital forms expand the horizons of design and create intricate patterns, these designs often boils down to mere eye candy. This idea sparked White and Little, the founders of the Los Angeles-based architecture practice Layer, to take the computational approach of digitized aesthetics combined with a perceptual method to create both a physically and intellectually engaging space. The result of this can be seen at their exhibit *Layer: A Loose Horizon*. Beginning on the exterior of the museums facade, visitors see a web-like structure that toys with depth and proportion while also bridging the exterior and interior space of the museums lobby. Upon entering, guests experience a continuous interaction with the exhibit and become enveloped by the surrounding shapes. To understand the artists' process, sketches and early digital iterations of the project are also be on view.

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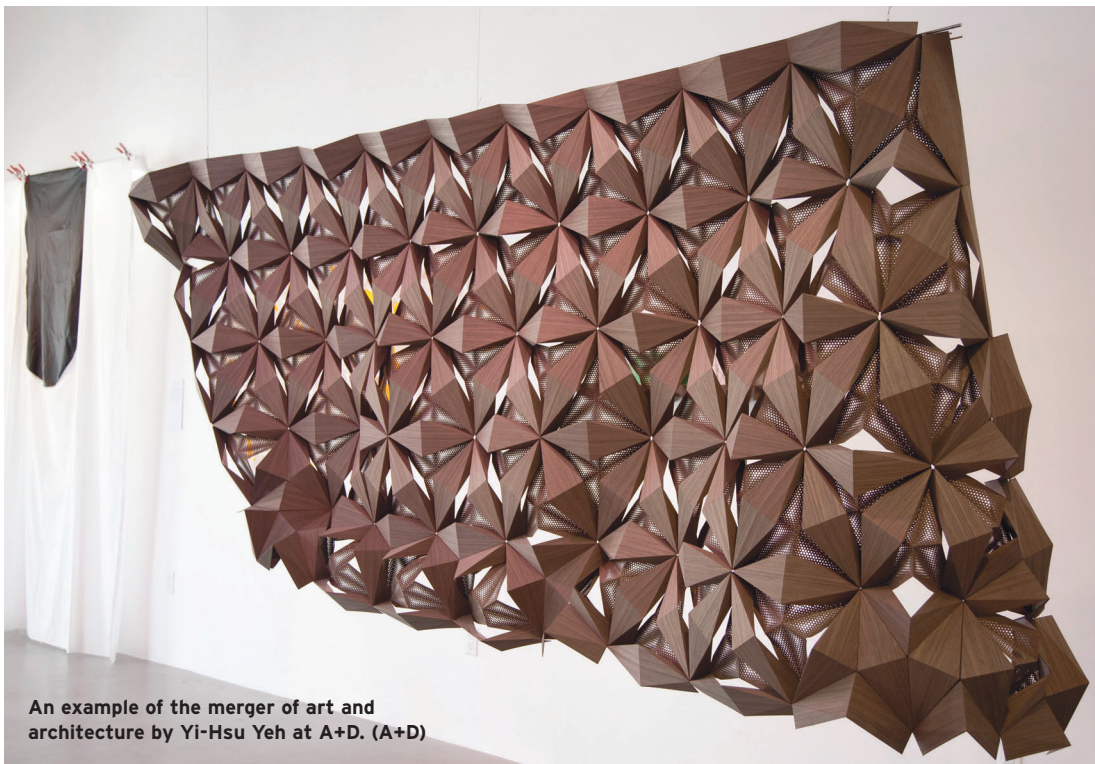


THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER SEPTEMBER 26, 2012

# WOMEN IN FOCUS

**California's Designing Women, 1896–1986**  
The Autry in Griffith Park  
4700 Western Heritage Way, Los Angeles  
Through January 6, 2013

**Come In: Les Femmes**  
Architecture and Design Museum  
6032 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles  
Closed September 8



An example of the merger of art and architecture by Yi-Hsu Yeh at A+D. (A+D)

Despite decades of the feminist movement and increasing participation of women in the workforce, women in architecture and design still seem to be suffering from a lack of promotion and, consequently, public awareness.

"Whenever people would talk to me about design, they'd always ask about the men," said Bill Stern, executive director of the Museum of California Design. Enter two exhibitions in Los Angeles that together form a compelling narrative of women in West Coast design over the last century.

Curated by Stern, *California's Designing Women, 1896–1986* at the Autry National Center of the American West lays the historical foundation for women in design in the past century. Beginning with Florence Lundborg's hand-cut woodblock-printed posters from the 1890s, the exhibit presents over 200 objects: textiles, ceramics, furniture, lighting, jewelry, clothing, and graphics, created by California women designers, many of whom are being shown for the first time.

An exhibit of this scope could easily be overwhelming, but Stern's loosely chronological presentation is instead enlightening. *California's Designing Women* represents five years of meticulous research. Stern scoured art markets, galleries, and even friends' homes for prime samples, such as a \$95,000 Gertrud

Natzler vase.

More than just beautiful objects, the pieces serve as proof that the California pioneering spirit that inspired experimentation and leaps in technology also influenced women to break out of traditional gender roles. Among them are Judith Hendler, who turned surplus acrylic used in aircraft windshields into an audacious line of jewelry most famously worn by Joan Collins in the TV show *Dynasty*; Cher Pendarvis, who not only rode the waves, but also made them by crafting surfboards out of polyurethane and fiberglass instead of heavy wood; and April Greiman, a pioneer in computer-aided design whose fold-out poster for *Design Quarterly* caps off the exhibition.

The Architecture and Design Museum's third annual *Come In* exhibition, *Les Femmes*, picks up where *California's Designing Women* leaves off—in the present. Unlike the Autry exhibit, *Les Femmes*, which closed in early September, was less historical survey, more free-flowing conversation.

Works by 25 female designers were presented on the floor, on the walls, and over the ceiling. No space was left untouched, even ambient lighting provided a chance to experiment as with Linda Taalman's subtle pink light installation overhead. Given full freedom over their contributions, **continued on page 19**

# THE LONG VIEW

*Oblique Drawing:  
A History of Anti-Perspective*  
Massimo Scolari  
MIT Press, \$39.95

While the study of artificial and natural perspective has yielded a huge literature, its inverse has received only sporadic attention. Massimo Scolari's *Oblique Perspective: A History of Anti-Perspective* intends to shift the balance by redirecting our attention to non-(or anti)-perspective. As architect, scholar, and artist, Scolari is eminently qualified for the job.

Its wealth of historical material notwithstanding, Scolari's volume doesn't qualify as a true history, nor does it offer an alternative to traditional methodologies in the field, despite its avoidance of the standard chronological structure. In fact the fragile framework imposed by chapter divisions proves unable to contain the flow of text that meanders through time and place, turning back upon itself as it wanders through Assyria, Egypt, China, etc. Scolari dawdles in tangential discussions, leaping in what seems random order from one example to the next. While each episode is engaging, one finds no overarching principle or cohesive structure

with which to connect the tales.

As a result, his "story" overwhelms when it should instruct, perplexes when it should illuminate. The book is an extravaganza of digression.

In fact, this is not an entirely new topic. Yves-Alain Bois opened the conversation with his excellent article, "Metamorphosis of Axonometry," some 30 years ago. Unlike Scolari he restricted his discussion to the rebirth of axonometry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the work and writings of such avant-garde artists as Van Doesberg, Malevich, and Lissitzky. He found the origins of axonometry in perspectival treatises and scientific, cartographic, machine, and military illustrations. He then proceeded to suggest the relevance of these early applications to 20<sup>th</sup>-century architectural practice. He spotted the difficulty Scolari himself faces in attempting a comprehensive survey, arguing that: "There are several different 'ideologies' of axonometry. It has been used in many different, often contradictory ways: Jesuit strategists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century used it quite differently than Lissitzky, Albers, and painters of the

**Inscription from a statue of King Djoser, Third Dynasty of Egypt by Massimo Scolari.**

Japanese Renaissance, or Russian constructivist architects." Scolari may have seen the problem but doesn't resolve it.

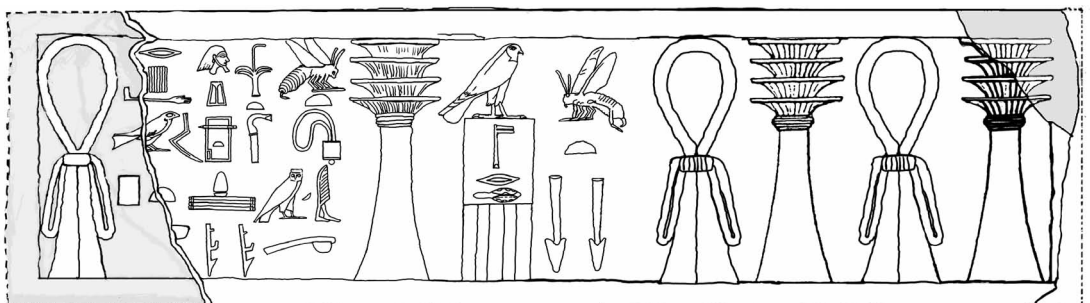
Other troubling issues plague Scolari's book. *Oblique Drawing* promises to be a scholarly work with its encyclopedic text and copious notes. But the reader has to wade through two dense chapters before chancing on Scolari's definition of his subject tucked away in Footnote 88 in Chapter 3. This essential information surely belongs in the main body of text, and his lengthy excursions into different cultures would be better slipped into footnotes or even a separate appendix. His many remarkable insights disappear in the proliferation of information and the book fails to be user-friendly for those accustomed to the ease of internet research.

Understanding images in their own time frame remains a complicated task. Scolari struggles to tease the original meaning out of the drawings by providing a wealth of apposite documents to guide our interpretation of the fascinating little black-and-white illustrations that pepper the text and notes. As an artist and scholar he is remarkably well suited to a purely visual analysis informed by his wide knowledge. While we do learn much from his careful looking when it is offered, he frequently falls back on the treatise as the sole reliable source for deciphering meaning. As the late art critic and philosopher Leo Steinberg explains in his essay "The Mute Image and the Meddling Text," such dependence solely on textual interpretation may prove misleading and often produces disturbing inaccuracies. Artists and architects tend to break rules or reinvent them as they work.

Further along in the book Scolari examines some non-Western

"proto-axonometric" images. Though he dedicates some notable pages to a discussion of Egyptian visual culture, he doesn't indicate how his exploration diverges from or expands upon the definitive earlier work by the distinguished scholar Heinrich Schafer whom he does cite. More significantly, he neglects Emma Brunner-Traut's epilogue that explains Schafer's notion of "aspective" (her term), or what Schafer believed to be the guiding principle in Egyptian representation. Similarly, Scolari revisits much of the same material that first appeared in Samuel Edgerton's chapter on Jesuits in the East in *The Heritage of Giotto's Geometry* without contributing new insights into the way misreading may alter our interpretation of illusionism.

Scolari initiates a gripping exploration of some syncretic manifestations of oblique perspective. Most studies on the subject occur in monographs on specific monuments such as the relief spandrels that





Muriel Coleman,  
*Coat Rack*

**WOMEN IN FOCUS** continued from page 18 the designers in the show covered all the bases from political statement to just plain fun.

Designer Petrula Vrontikis's *Brides=Maids* juxtaposed blissful bridal images with symbols of domestic drudgery like irons and cookware. Architect Doris Sung referenced tightening corsets in her outdoor sculptures made out of thermobimetal that contracts and expands according to ambient heat. Inspired by baking implements, artist Tanya Aguiniga turned the usual domestic role in on itself by wielding a cake decorator to create a swirling and churning texture treatment for an otherwise boring, flat wall. Paper and scissors are artist Rebecca Niederlander's chosen weapons. In *The*

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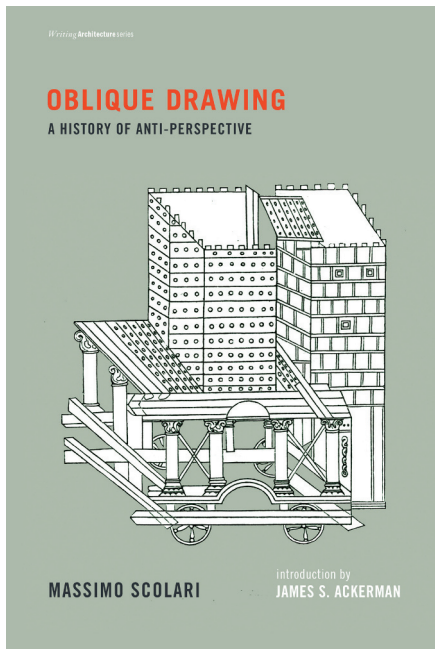
*Devil's Workshop*, Niederlander built a sculptural paper installation that crawls up toward the ceiling.

Others chose to take gender out of the conversation and instead focus on the more-encompassing environmental question. A strange machine of tubes, vacuums, and pink and blue liquid mysteriously stands on the far end, blurring the line between organic and man-made. A work by Alison Petty Ragguette looked almost human one minute, mechanical the next, begging the question, "How far should we go to explore technology at nature's expense?" Fashioning a waterfall of water bottles, architects at Minarc shed light on humanity's continual disruption of nature's water cycles.

Amid these serious questions were moments of levity. Architecture practice Design, Bitches, in collaboration with photographer Meiko Takechi Arquillos, designed a photo booth complete with props to recreate design's most iconic shots: Think of the Eameses on a motorcycle. Installation artist Jennifer Wolf quite literally waved a pink flag, attaching huge textiles—dyed red and pink from cochineal insect extract—to the museum's posts to turn the small Wilshire space into a ship ready to set sail for destinations unknown.

These two complementary exhibitions show us that women have always been part of design history, most even working at its cutting edge. The challenge now is to keep their names in design books, not just as women who design, but simply as designers who pushed the envelope and succeeded.

**CARREN JAO IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.**



once decorated the facade on the temple of Amavarati in India or the Theodosian Obelisk base in Istanbul. These works reveal the complex way remnants of Greco-Roman perspective systems combine with local forms to generate a new visual language in which traces of older systems meld with newer ones for the expressive needs of an evolving visual culture. Scolari's brief discussion of syncretism serves to identify the need for a more profound investigation of this complex subject—one that might include such literary sources as Orhan Pamuk's historical murder mystery *My Name is Red*. (The novel hinges on the exposure of the

betrayal of Turkish painters who secretly learned the perspective technique of the "infidel Frankish masters." The tale reveals the allure of Western perspective for the miniaturists despite its static, monocular system.) Scolari might have touched on the deeper issues behind the way Western perspective challenges Eastern beliefs that impel their mode of representing space.

Yet, despite its weaknesses this enormous compendium, a result of his wide-ranging teaching and the conclusion of a long personal involvement, does provide an excellent resource for artists, architects, and historians. And, finally, what *Oblique Perspective* does achieve is to underscore the need for a more comprehensive study, or perhaps even many studies.

But the book's greatest contribution is the way it enhances our understanding and appreciation of Scolari's exquisite drawings, recently shown at Yale University School of Architecture (*Massimo Scolari: The Representation of Architecture, 1967–2012*). Here, Scolari provides a full-page reproduction of Joseph Futenbach the Elder's Mannhafter Kunstspiegel done in 1642. One quickly detects how this obscure work shares a powerful affinity with the way Scolari's magical buildings inhabit space. As we follow his choice of illustrations we begin to grasp the relevance or even urgency of this subject for his own work. We are indeed grateful for the chance to enrich our comprehension of the way his unique vision has evolved and the importance of its place in the history of representation.

**NANCY GOLDRING IS AN ARTIST AND WRITER BASED IN NEW YORK.**

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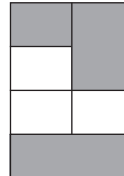
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Julie V. Iovine tours the exhibition with David Chipperfield, conversing about his ideas on contemporary architecture culture.

## THE THINKING BEHIND THE VENICE BIENNALE

### How does the global economic crisis connect with the theme of *Common Ground*?

I don't think it's in a direct way but I certainly wanted a theme that had some relevance to this moment. It's not a crisis biennale. I don't think an exhibition about architecture is agile enough to make precise statements. Clearly the whole theme of common ground was a provocation to the profession to think harder about what we share intellectually and physically in terms of our inspirations, our concerns, and predicaments. The reason I chose this theme is that there is a societal mood shift right now after a period of excessive growth and emphasis on the individual and on the spectacular.

### Asking architects to invite other participants resulted in some gaps, how do you account for the absences?

I wanted to avoid the idea that the biennale is primarily about a list. The list becomes the defining thing. I wanted to escape that, but, of course, you can't. Whoever you invite is going to exclude someone else. The invitation does mean something. Common ground is the fragile moment where people from diverse and opposite positions agree that they share some things. It's very easy to have common ground if you choose everyone from the same drawer. I wanted to choose from different drawers. If you can put Zaha Hadid and postmodernist Hans Kollhoff in the same space and get people comparing their thoughts, that's interesting.

### How broad can the definition of architecture become and still be architecture?

This is an exhibition of architecture. It is not sociology or urban politics. I am interested in the physical stuff of architecture.

Making architecture in South America is very different than making architecture in Europe but that is not an excuse to act as if they are irrelevant to each other.

### The fastest changes in global architecture are happening in places like Africa and China, and yet they do not have a big presence here. Why not?

In the time we had it was very difficult to establish connections in those places. For me, while it is true that architects are completely dependent on the societies they work in, I still wanted to stay close to the materiality of architecture. I needed to use practitioners to talk about that. If I was doing a more researched and academic review of architecture tendencies, it would have been fascinating to see, for instance, how colonial architecture in North Africa influenced another generation. But how

many issues can you take on? We did try to deal with an informal approach to architecture through groups like Urban-Think Tank who looked at an office building in Caracas full of squatters. It puts on the table another view of what architecture does. I am working on themes rather than a United Nations approach to individual projects. It's clear this is a Eurocentric exhibition—and so is architecture culture today. Clearly, China is a huge issue. My concern was spreading ourselves too thin.

### Rem Koolhaas has complained that architects are too often pitted against each other and that is damaging to the profession.

Obviously that's what the whole show is about. When some of us sit around in bars after some competition, even if we don't like each other's work, after a few whiskeys you find you all have a lot of similar interests. If we can do that there why can't we do it professionally? I have so much respect for the talent of architects that I wanted to create a tent where they could show architecture instead of themselves. The free market has confused architects' ability to confess to shared ideas. That has contributed to the lack of



Above: Zaha Hadid Architects, *Arum*, 2012  
Below: FAT, *Villa Rotunda Redux*, 2012

commonality. I wanted to take the pressure off and say you are all great architects, we know that. Don't impress me with computer renderings of your latest tower. Instead, explain to us where your ideas come from, how you do what you do, and how you contribute to our common understanding of architecture culture.

### What was preparing the biennale like?

I resented not having enough time to see more people. The pressure of time was stressful. It was a little overrun by logistical issues and conversations were always contaminated by trying to balance budgets and timelines. Asking people to ask people didn't work that well. It worked nicely that I went to 20 architects and that brought in 50 exhibitors, but then we started having to plug in the holes. If you are trying to talk about architecture culture now, you have to dig deeper than just who's hot now. The biennale is not an "Architecture's Got Talent" show.

### Many projects invoke the past in ways that suggest postmodernism. Is that intentional?

Yes. Postmodernism hit when I was at the Architectural Association. It produced the worst architecture but it triggered an important shift in how we think about modernism so we owe it a huge debt. The biennale at that time really captured that pivotal moment. That biennale was my model. I also want to identify this moment of change as we reconsider the selfishness of the past 20 years.

### What worries you most about architecture today?

I am frightened about architecture that is only about formalism. Architecture has to have meaning, not just novelty. The biggest ambition can't be just to be different. When we only talk about what architecture looks like, its color or what's in the lobby, we are just becoming decorators. We have lost confidence in our ability to really do things. The conversation has become too introverted. How come there is such a disconnect between what architects think they are doing and how they wish to serve society and how they really serve society? All good architects think they are making a contribution to society—Why does society think architects are just a bunch of profiteering egotistical joyriders? We want the same things. That's what common ground is about.



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